

Charles Russell Building
Northwest corner, Union and North Water Streets
New Bedford
Bristol County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-687

HABS
MASS,
3-NEBED,
21-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 5, Pennsylvania

CHARLES RUSSELL BUILDING

HABS
MASS,
3-NEBED,
21-

Address: Northwest corner, Union and North Water Streets,
New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts

Present Use: Warehouse for food business

Brief Statement of Significance: A representative commercial building of the 1820's
in the old business district of New Bedford

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following is quoted from page 343 of "Old Dartmouth": "The brick building on the corner was erected in 1828 by Charles Russell and at the time of his failure in 1833 went to his creditors, and in 1841 conveyed by them to Benjamin and William Cummings and is still a part of the Cummings trust."

According to another authority the building was originally built for both Charles and Seth Russell, Jr. [Ricketson, pages 67-68/.

2. Notes on alterations and additions: The sundial on the Union Street front was restored c. 1900 ["Old Dartmouth," page 343/.
3. Sources of information: Worth, Palmer and Austin, "Old Dartmouth," a manuscript in the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, Johnny Cake Hill, New Bedford, Massachusetts. This consists of photographs of houses and public buildings in New Bedford, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Dartmouth and Westport; photographs by Fred W. Palmer, introduction and notes by Henry B. Worth, "done into shape" by Emma C. Austin; dated September, 1907.

Daniel Ricketson, New Bedford of the Past (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903). A book of reminiscences.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A simple store and office building of the early nineteenth century with monolithic piers on the first-story fronts; the interior has been largely remodeled.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: About 41' on Union Street by 52' on Water Street. Three stories, fronting south and east.
2. Wall construction: Small brick (typical of New Bedford) laid in Flemish bond, on upper stories. North wall is stuccoed (west wall is hidden from view). First story of south and east fronts have piers of a single stone each, and stone lintels; this stone work is painted. There are six unequal bays on the south, seven on the east. Two bays on east front now bricked up.
3. Chimneys: One of brick on the east side, two bays from the south end; one of brick on the north end near the east wall.
4. Openings: Windows: Double hung wood sash, 4/4 lights. Sandstone lintels shaped like a flat arch, and apparently tooled to imitate brick; now somewhat weathered. Sandstone sills.
5. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: A hip at the street corner, with gables at the north and west ends. Now covered with asphalt composition shingles.
 - b. Cornice: Box cornice, with ovolo-moulded wooden gutter; modern conductors.
6. Miscellaneous: On the south wall, at second floor height, is a sundial. One is said to have been there a long time, then disused, and restored c. 1900 ["Old Dartmouth" page 343].

C. Technical Description of Interior: The interior appears to have been largely remodeled at an undetermined date or dates, as evidenced by cast iron columns on the ground floor, and modern composition board ceilings.

D. Site: The northwest corner of two business streets. The building is built on the sidewalk lines; the other two sides abut adjoining buildings.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
September 1961.